

Are unhealthy freshwater ecosystems bad for us?

Is the apocalypse coming asks Dr Death

Russell Death¹, Meredith Davis¹ & Alison Dewes²

¹River Science Massey University & ²Tipu Whenua



Its not easy giving public talks as a river ecologist ☹

Highest
percentage of
endangered
freshwater fish
species in the
world ☹

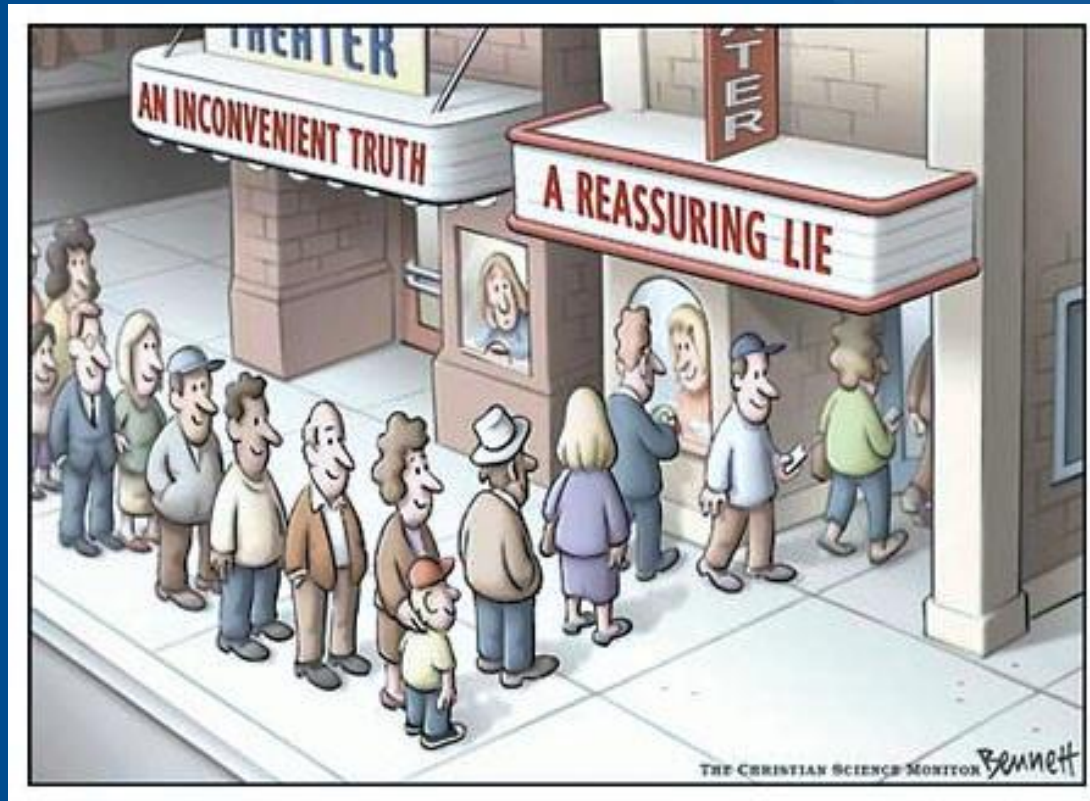
Most polluted
river in the
Western world
☹

Giving water
(from National
Parks) to bottling
companies to
sell :-(

No monitoring of
any endangered
freshwater
invertebrates ☹

Increasing
nitrate
levels in our
waterways
☹

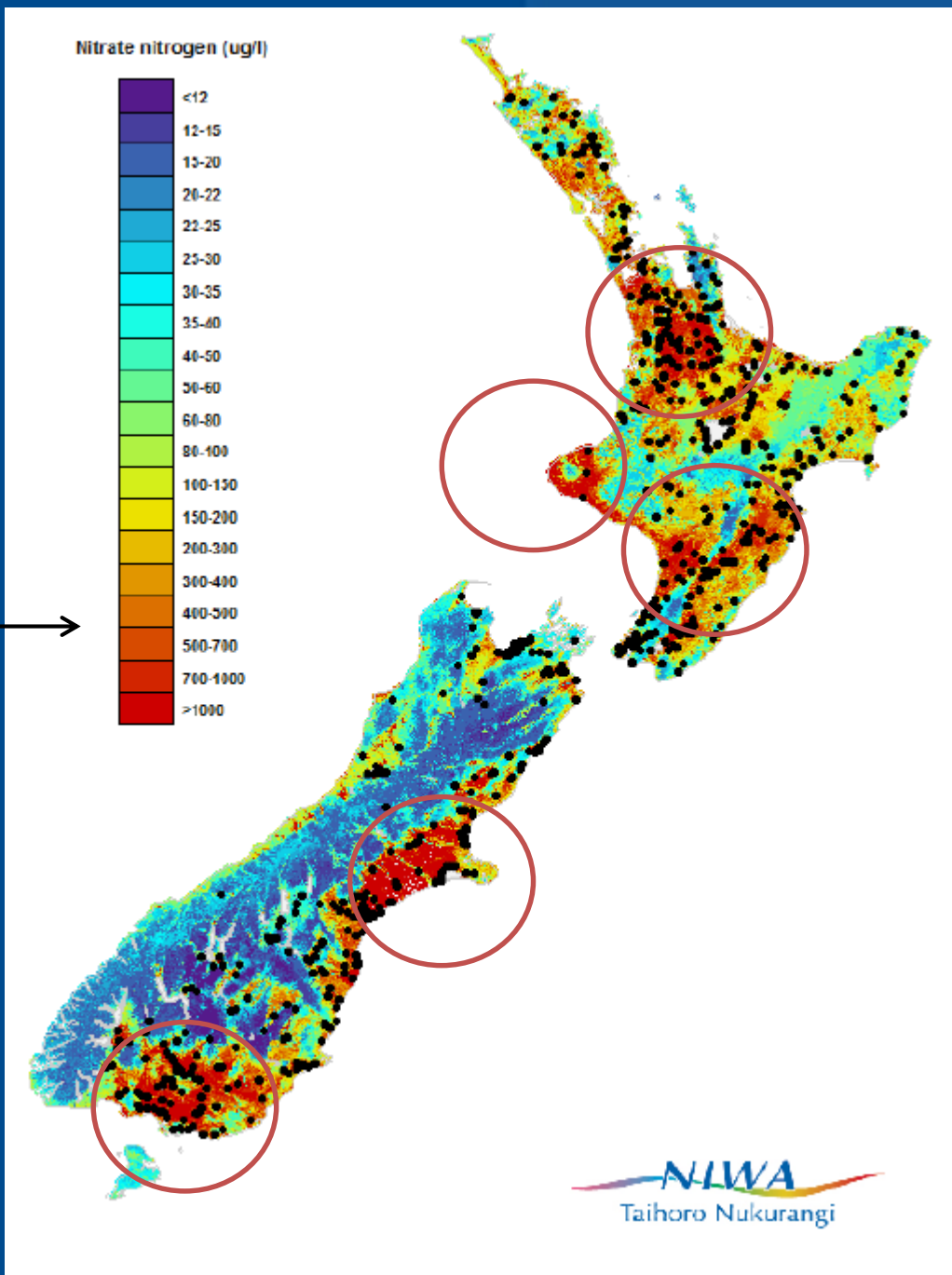
Highest level
of some
waterborne
diseases in
the world ☹



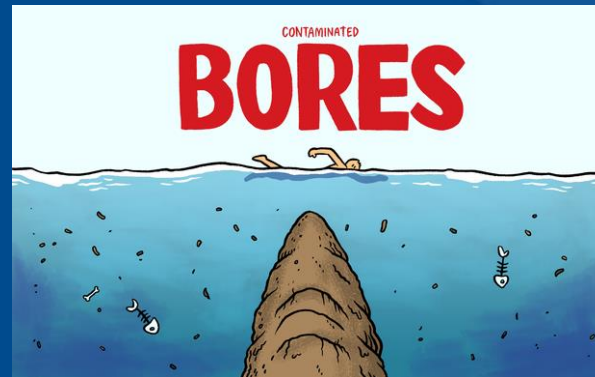




Is water
quality
declining
in New
Zealand?
ANZECC
trigger level



Unprecedented public concern about our waterways



Three reports this year say – water quality is “declining”



Not to mention 20 + years of science research

Environ Biol Fish
© 2007

Environ Biol Fish
© 2007

Do
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The influence
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Alexander E
Institute of

Abstract. Demand for water from streams for protecting the ecological few experimental studies reduced discharge by 8 channels/pipes and during a 2-mo period of drift distance in control measured the head caps to influence drift distance reduction, but drift return of some taxa was elevated reduced-flow condition concluded that some to the drift or increased that, in turn, initiated individual can travel in for rapid escape of unf

Key words: macroin aquatic invertebrates.

Water use has risen exponentially population growth in the last Jackson et al. 2001). Approp surface water for human use aquatic biota. The ecological water from aquatic environ interest to water managem public, but few experimental on the impacts of flow reductio (Dewson et al. 2007a). Mo observational surveys that es drought (e.g., Cowx et al. 1 compared reaches above and b

¹ Present address: ELS.H. Aqu Place, Palmerston North 4412, N james@ihug.co.nz

² E-mail addresses: zoe.dewson r.g.death@massey.ac.nz

Intro
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J. N. Am. Benthol. Soc., 2007, 26(4):754–766
© 2007 by The North American Benthol. Soc.
DOI: 10.1899/07-0038.1
Published online 16 October 2007

Invertebrate
discharge

Zoe S. Dewson
Institute of

Abstract. Water abstr suitability of habitat for invertebrate communiti manipulations to imitat >85% in 3 small New Z. to moderately polluted, each stream before and the diversions in operat mo of flow reduction. E velocity and depth also and temperature were Ephemeroptera, Plecopt taxonomic richness dec invertebrate community changed in response to composition involved cl Our results indicate th streams that vary in wat to changes in the physi

Key words: water abs

Understanding of the impact stream ecosystems is crucial because global demand for w likelihood of modification of climate change are increasing. T urbanization of the human po ally expanding area of irrig many factors leading to increa usage (Postel 1997, Amell 1999 ous climate-change scenarios pr on the expected direction and m precipitation (Amell and Reyna al. 2004). In any case, the glob water is expected to change further affecting the balance b

¹ E-mail addresses: zoe.dewson alex.james@ihug.co.nz
² alex.james@ihug.co.nz
³ r.g.death@massey.ac.nz

Freshwater Biology (2007)

APPLIED ISS

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Introduction

There has been a over the last centu and a correspondi (Jackson et al., 2001 ing to predicted a

Correspondence: Zoe Ecology, Massey Univ Palmerston North, Ne E-mail: zoe.dewson@

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Hydrology and
Earth System
Sciences



River water quality changes in New Zealand over 26 years: response to land use intensity

Jason P. Julian^{1,5}, Kirsten M. de Beurs^{2,5}, Braden Owsley^{2,5}, Robert J. Davies-Colley³, and Anne-Gaelle E. Aussel⁴

¹Department of Geography, Texas State University, San Marcos, TX, USA

²Department of Geography and Environmental Sustainability, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK, USA

³National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA), Hamilton, New Zealand

⁴Landcare Research, Palmerston North, New Zealand

⁵Landscape & Land Use Change Institute (LLUCI), University of Oklahoma and Texas State University, Oklahoma, Texas, USA

Correspondence to: Jason P. Julian (jason.julian@txstate.edu)

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Abstract. Relationships between land use and water quality are complex with interdependencies, feedbacks, and legacy effects. Most river water quality studies have assessed catchment land use as areal coverage, but here, we hypothesize and test whether land use intensity – the inputs (fertilizer, livestock) and activities (vegetation removal) of land use – is a better predictor of environmental impact. We use New Zealand (NZ) as a case study because it has had one of the highest rates of agricultural land intensification globally over recent decades. We interpreted water quality state and trends for the 26 years from 1989 to 2014 in the National Rivers Water Quality Network (NRWQN) – consisting of 77 sites on 35 mostly large river systems. To characterize land use intensity, we analyzed spatial and temporal changes in livestock density and land disturbance (i.e., bare soil resulting from vegetation loss by either grazing or forest harvesting) at the catchment scale, as well as fertilizer inputs at the national scale. Using simple multivariate statistical analyses across the 77 catchments, we found that median visual water clarity was best predicted inversely by areal coverage of intensively managed pastures. The primary predictor for all four nutrient variables (TN, NO₃–N, TP, DRP), however, was cattle density, with plantation forest coverage as the secondary predictor variable. While land disturbance was not itself a strong predictor of water quality, it did help explain outliers of land use–water quality relationships. From 1990 to 2014, visual clarity significantly improved in 35 out of 77 (34/77) catchments, which we attribute mainly to increased

dairy cattle exclusion from rivers (despite dairy expansion) and the considerable decrease in sheep numbers across the NZ landscape, from 58 million sheep in 1990 to 31 million in 2012. Nutrient concentrations increased in many of NZ's rivers with dissolved oxidized nitrogen significantly increasing in 27/77 catchments, which we largely attribute to increased cattle density and legacy nutrients that have built up on intensively managed grasslands and plantation forests since the 1950s and are slowly leaking to the rivers. Despite recent improvements in water quality for some NZ rivers, these legacy nutrients and continued agricultural intensification are expected to pose broad-scale environmental problems for decades to come.

1 Introduction

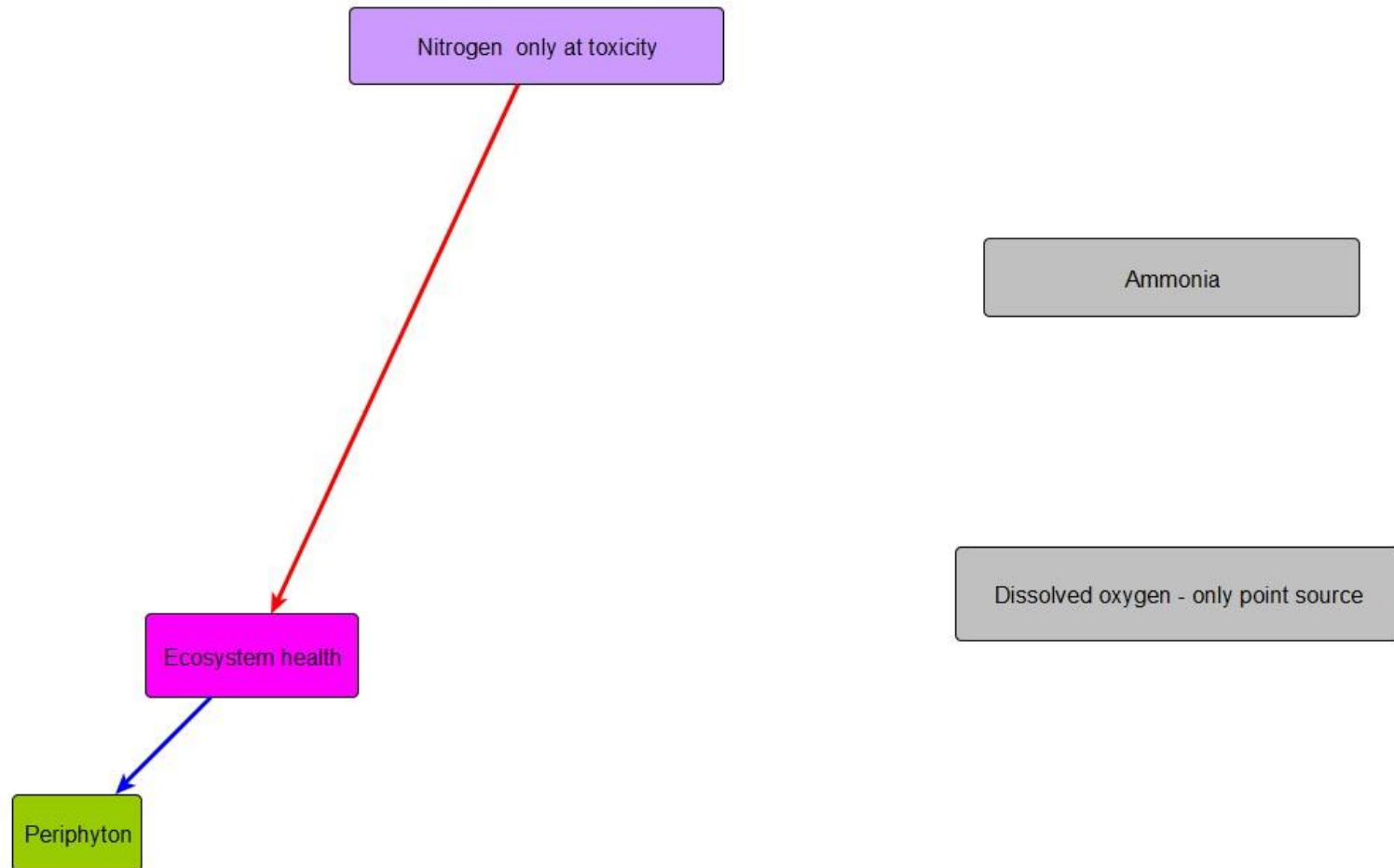
River water quality reflects multiple activities and processes within its catchment, including geomorphic processes, vegetation characteristics, climate, and anthropogenic land uses (Brierley, 2010). Relationships between water quality and these catchment characteristics are not straightforward because all of these factors interact over both space and time. For example, if intensive livestock grazing occurs on steep slopes, surface runoff and consequently river turbidity is expected to be greater than if grazing occurs on flatter areas; in other respects, if fertilizers are heavily applied to sandy soils with high drainage density, rivers will likely become

*Just as dirty as
before Water
reforms 2017*

**Clean
Water**

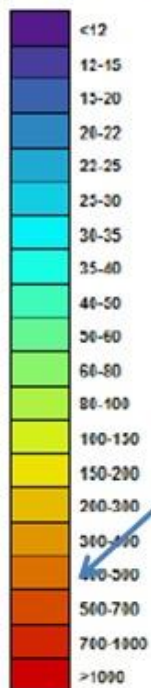
90% of rivers and
lakes swimmable
by 2040





"A fresh start for freshwater" NPS objectives 2014: (making the problem disappear)

Nitrate nitrogen (ug/l)



All red areas exceed the ANZECC guideline to protect ecosystem health

Before

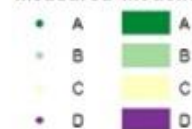
NIWA
Taihoro Nukurangi

Sampling site locations



Band of current state
Nitrate Toxicity

Measured Modelled

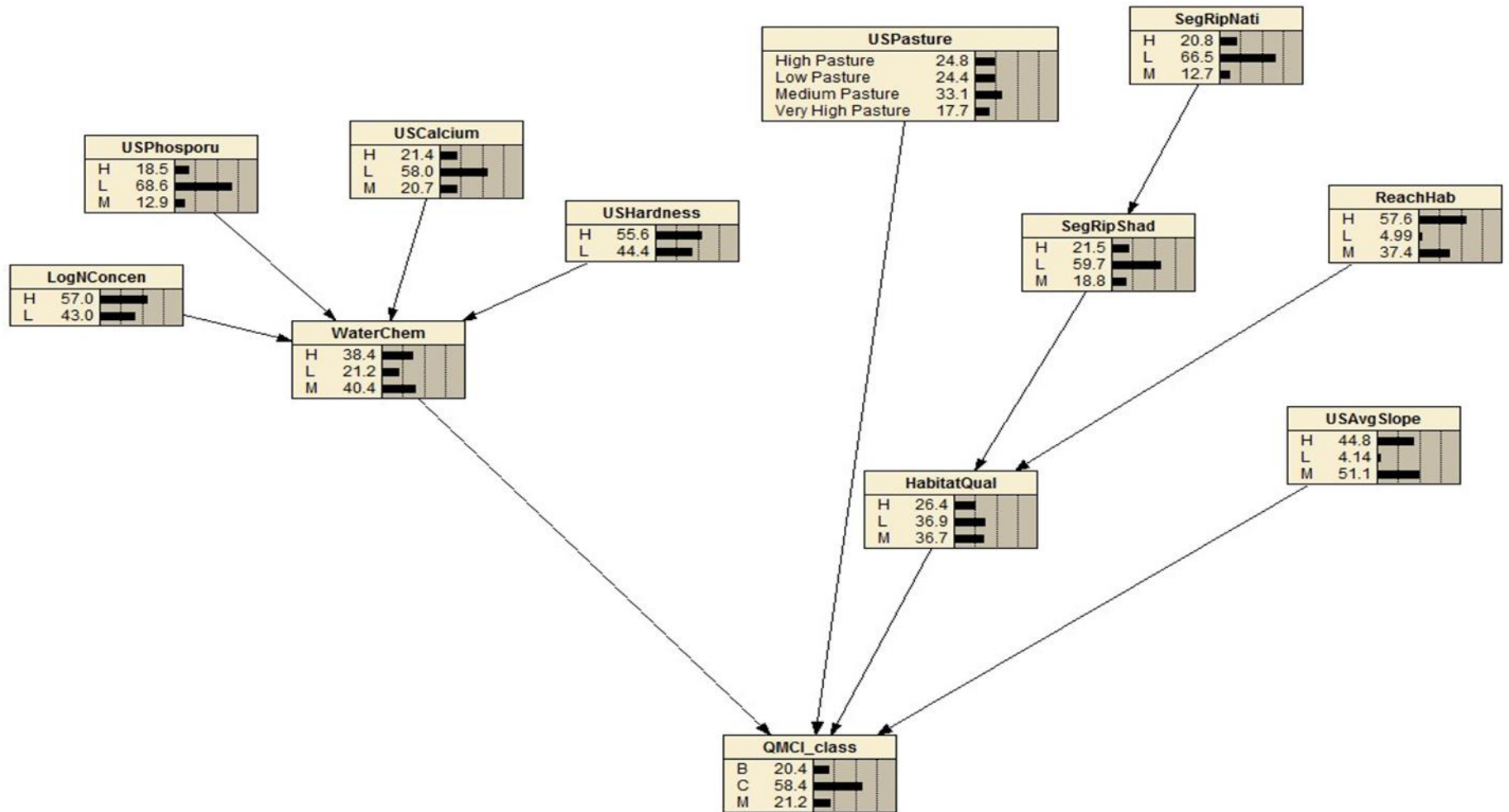


After

Why is water quality bad?



Ecology Decision Support Tools





11.3 km

Image © 2014 DigitalGlobe
Image © 2014 CNES / Airbus
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

Google Earth

Poor health in New Zealand rivers?

Ecological health



Human health



Cryptosporidium
Giardia lamblia
Toxoplasma
Cyclospora
Entamoeba

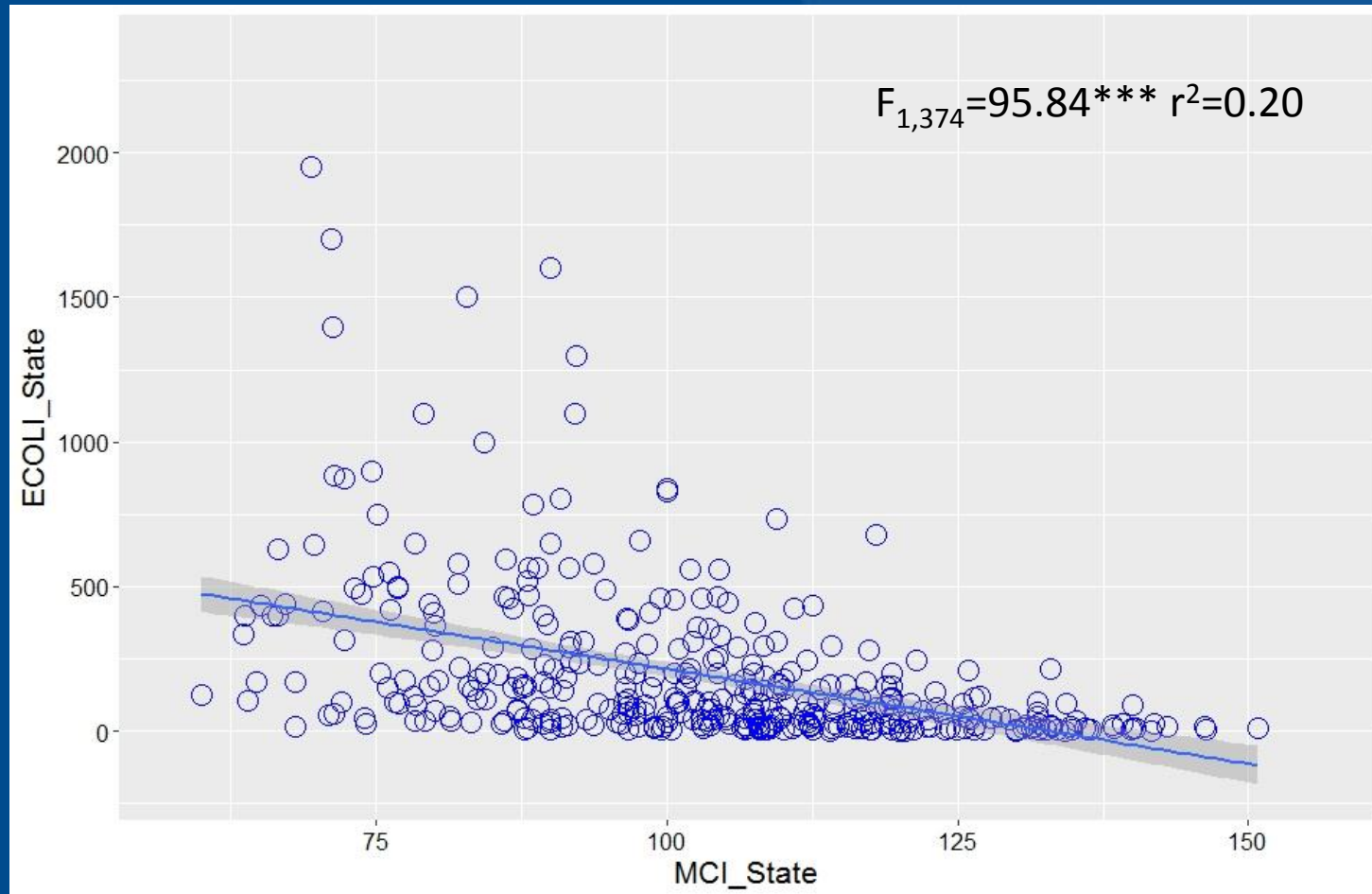
Hepatitis
Adenoviruses
Non-Group A
Rotaviruses
Caliciviruses

Vibrio (cholerae, vulnificus)
Escherichia coli
Faecal coliform
Shigella
Helicobacter pylori
Leptospira
Campylobacter
Yersinia enterocolitica
Salmonella (typhoid,
paratyphoid)
Clostridium
Mycobacterium
Legionella



Does ecological health = human health?

Human health ↓



Ecological health →



SICK OF TOO MANY COWS

How intensive livestock farming
could be endangering our health

GREEN

In New Zealand, infections from zoonoses “are among the highest reported for any developed country ... and are a major public health concern” ^[16].

“Reported cases of cryptosporidiosis are higher in New Zealand than in Australia, the UK, Germany and the USA ^[17].”

The same is true for Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (a group of *E. coli* bacteria that cause infection in humans, also known as verocytotoxigenic *E. coli*) ^[18] and giardiasis ^[3].

Agricultural industry solution

Dairynz

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DAIRY FARMERS SPEND OVER \$1 BILLION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

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DAIRY FARMERS SPEND OVER \$1 BILLION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

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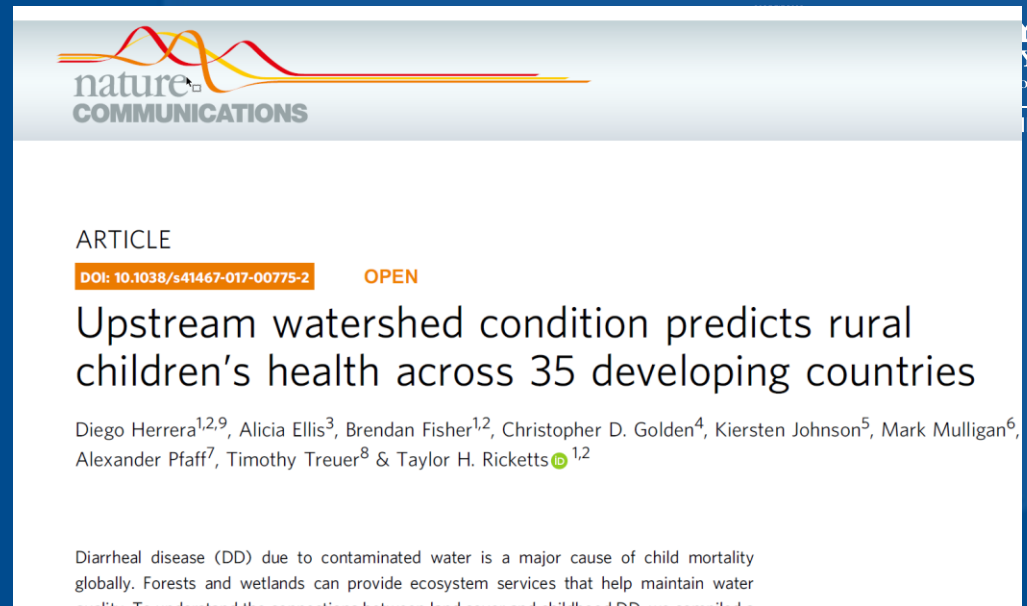
Federated Farmers and DairyNZ have conducted a survey on New Zealand dairy farmers' environmental investments, revealing an estimated spend of over \$1 billion over the past five years.

Five percent of the nation's dairy farmers responded to the survey and reported on the environmental initiatives they had invested in such as effluent management, stock exclusion, riparian planting, upgrading systems and investing in technology, retiring land and developing wetlands.

ENVIRONMENTAL SPEND BY DAIRY FARMERS
\$1 BILLION
OVER 5 YEARS



Solution = One Health



- Do ecologists and microbiologists work together in a catchment management framework?
- Even the regulatory framework seems disjointed
- It also seems the solution framework is disjointed



Are unhealthy rivers bad for?

YES



Its also our economic edge?
Doesn't it make financial sense to have
healthy rivers?

